

June 15, 1999

Ms. Cristina Purdhum
Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center
101 Highwatch Road
Effingham Falls, NH 03814

Dear Cristina,

Enclosed please find a written summary of the Special Education Monitoring and Improvement Process' visiting team findings from their visit of April 22, 1999. This information is being sent to you for inclusion in your Special Education Monitoring and Improvement Process Final Report.

If you have any questions or I may be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Maryclare Heffernan
Special Education Consultant

**New Hampshire Special Education
Monitoring and Improvement Process
Visiting Team Compliance Component Summary
Visit Conducted April 22, 1999
Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center**

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Special Education Monitoring and Improvement Compliance visit was conducted at Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center . External team members worked collaboratively with the staff at Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center on April 23, 1999 in order to review the status of Special Education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the application materials that were submitted by the school and a check of teaching certifications of special education personnel. In addition, interviews were held with the administrator, special education teachers, and related service personnel as availability permitted. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel, which was greatly appreciated.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: Conducted on June 3, 1996

There have been several visits to Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center during the past few years. However, the report that exits as the previous compliance summary was developed following the June 3, 1996 visit. At that time the citations noted included a number of basic areas in need of clarification. Among those was the need for Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center to develop specific admission policies that would include an established system of transitioning students to a less restrictive setting. This visiting team continues to see a clear need for Lakeview to create specific program descriptions; admission criteria that identifies the disabilities and educational needs of the student population to be served; and a clear system of transitioning students back to less restrictive settings, including access to local public schools when such integration may be beneficial.

An area of further concern to the visiting team is that the Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center was granted a one year conditional approval for an elementary program only. The admission material of the school indicates that there is NH Special Education Approval through age 17. There is no high school approval for special education programming at this time.

In the area of monitoring student progress relative to student IEP's in a regular and systematic manner, Lakeview education staff do maintain progress records. In the area of Child Management Techniques Lakeview staff are SOLVE trained and there is a system of behavior management in place. However, this visiting team found that further information is needed regarding the isolation of students to the

residence, following certain behavioral incidents. Related to this are the implications that if students are suspended from their educational program the appropriate procedures take place as detailed in the reauthorized IDEA. Another area of citation from the previous visit is found in staff certification. While the educational staff are all presently participating in a NH Department of Education alternative certification process, at the time of the visit there were no special education certified staff to provide supervision to the uncertified staff. Further implications for lack of specific certification in areas related to the disabilities of Lakeview students may be found in a general lack of understanding and skill related to interpreting evaluation results, creating relevant educational plans and offering well developed curriculum to all students.

A final area identified in the previous report was the inadequate instructional space. The Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center is in the process of converting an existing building on the property to a new educational center. However, at the time of this visit, the students were working in small spaces, with little room for any instructional activities other than table work. The classroom area was not well designed and relied on portable partitions to create separate work areas. There was a single computer in the school, shared by all of the programs. The instructional spaces lacked an appropriate array of instructional materials and other evidence of well developed instructional practices.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation presently provides special education services to approximately 34 students ages 6 to 17. There are no New Hampshire students placed at the school at this time. The program has requested NH Department of Education Special Education Program Approval for students through grade eight. They are presently completing a one-year conditional special education approval for students through grade eight. The school has been working toward compliance for several years and it was anticipated that this year's visit would find significant progress toward areas previously identified as noncompliant. The concern, however, is that many of the same issues exist today and there appears to be little awareness of changing federal and state guidelines. No program improvements were obvious to the visiting team.

In summary, the compliance visit conducted by this team found many of the same concerns that were previously identified as early as 1996 and have identified several new areas as well. The critical areas of concern include the following :

- Lack of appropriately certified education staff
- Lack of appropriate supervision to uncertified staff
- Unclear admission and discharge criteria
- Lack of appropriate instructional materials and weak evidence of the implementation of a well designed curriculum
- Lack of access to full elementary curricula in the NH Minimum State Standards
- Lack of adequate instructional spaces
- Lack of adequate technology
- Unclear school calendar, including length of school year and length of school day devoted to student instruction

- Unclear child management practices (concern regarding isolation to residence following behavioral incident and unclear procedures related to IDEA)
- Lack of access to least restrictive settings in the community
- Unclear documentation regarding the connection to and involvement with sending districts

The visiting team received assurances from the Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation administration that several of the areas noted above are under revision (i.e. new education building, increased number of computers planned, consultant agreements recently acquired, etc.). However, the concern remains that most of the previously identified (1996) areas of noncompliance continue to be evidenced at this time and, without specific visible proof of improved practices, it is difficult to determine Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center's eligibility for a NH Department of Education program approval at this time.

COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: All Programs

COMMENDATIONS:

- Staff appear to be caring and interested in providing appropriate instruction to their students.
- Staff indicate a willingness to participate in professional development opportunities related to program improvement and best instructional practices for their students.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

- Ed #1133.05(a,b) The admission and discharge policies and procedures are unclear and do not appear to include the appropriate staff. The material further indicates NHDOE special education program approval through age 17. There is no special education high school approval at this time.
- Ed#1133.04(f) The written admission process does not translate clearly for NH students in describing the identification of disabilities eligible for enrollment at Lakeview. Process is also unclear.
- Ed #1133.05 (c,g) The distribution and use of IEP's in creating lesson plans and relevant instruction for students is unclear.
- Ed # 1133.05(h) It does not appear that all students have access to equal educational opportunities within the programs.
- Ed#1133.05(j) School programs do not utilize community resources for student experiences in least restrictive environment.

Ed#1133.07	Behavior management policies and procedures are unclear relating to school program. Policies must be created to comply fully with the reauthorized IDEA requirements for the suspension of disabled students.
Ed#1133.12 Ed#1119.09	The length of the school year is unclear. Length of the school day appears to be well short of the required 5 1/4 hours per day required for Elementary school students.
Ed#1119.06(d)	The present instructional area is insufficient in size and space to implement students IEP's.
Ed#1133.08(a) Ed#1133.05 (k)	Duly licensed or certified, instruction, support, and related services personnel are not presently available to special education students.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The team suggests work in the area of developing clearer relationships with sending school districts so that consistency in record keeping, communication and assessment is improved.
- The team suggests that Lakeview create a plan for administering the NHEIAP assessments to third and sixth grade students, in the event that NH students attend in the future.
- School administration may wish to participate in a New Hampshire special education organization (i.e. New Hampshire Special Education Administrators Association) in an effort to stay current with NH standards and best practices.
- Provide training to staff that is highly connected to current curriculum practices in community schools.
- Provide opportunities for staff to visit other existing private and public school sites to increase understanding of current best practices.
- Consider referring students as “students” as opposed to “clients”.